

Wellness Ingrained in School of Nursing Mission

BY DAN SADOWSKY

Providing WebMD visitors access to expert nurses isn't the only way the School of Nursing is promoting better health. Teaching and promulgating self-care, behavioral change and other aspects of wellness promotion have been enshrined in the institution's strategic plan since 1997, says Marna Flaherty-Robb, M.S.N., R.N., associate dean for practice development and integration.

Improving self-care competency and building institutions that support those skills, she says, is at the heart of the OHSU School of Nursing's mission and the nursing discipline. The roster of notable health-promotion activities includes:

- **The Center for Healthy Aging's five-year Healthy Balance study** looks at the influence of nutrition and physical activity on physical functioning, health and quality of life. Researchers think exercise patterns as well as diet may influence the onset and prevalence of certain cancers, and they hope to explore those relationships in a series of forthcoming studies.
- As part of her ongoing **research on fibromyalgia**, a complex chronic-pain syndrome, Kim Dupree Jones, Ph.D., assistant professor of nursing, is investigating how combining medications and physical exercise might provide symptom relief for a condition found in nearly 7 percent of women.
- OHSU, as a leader in the **Oregon Consortium for Nursing Education**, is helping draft a new-and-improved nursing curriculum that lists "helping clients stay healthy" as one of four priority areas for effective nursing.
- OHSU Health Management Services, in a joint relationship with the University of Rhode Island Cancer Prevention Research Center, has received \$1.1 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to study the impact of different recruitment methods and interventions to **improve the health of employees in the workplace**.
- The first South Waterfront building in Portland, now under construction and slated for a mid-2006 opening, will include a three-floor **wellness center**.

It's a wide range of efforts, Flaherty-Robb points out, aimed at producing better outcomes, lowering health care costs and keeping OHSU on the cutting edge of wellness research nationwide.

